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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 KUWAIT 002413

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SUBJECT: DART CORRIDOR UPDATE: MOVING WFP FOOD COMMODITIES INTO IRAQ

SUMMARY

[¶11.](#) To reach the monthly tonnage of 487,000 MT of food commodities needed for the first nationwide public distribution since the war, WFP had hoped to transport 30,000 MT of food every day into Iraq. Due to a combination of factors, including insecurity on the roads, insecure and damaged warehouses and silos, limited reception and storage capacity, and irregular arrival of ships at certain ports, WFP has not yet reached its daily target, but maintains the 30,000 MT per day as its goal. As of 26 May, WFP has moved approximately 360,370 MT inside Iraq. End Summary.

CORRIDOR DOWNFALLS

[¶12.](#) The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) had planned to move approximately 30,000 metric tons (MT) of food commodities per day over five corridors: Jordan - 9,000 MT; Syria/Lebanon - 5,000 MT; Turkey - 6,000 MT; Iran - 1,000 MT; and Kuwait/Umm Qasr, Iraq - 9,000 MT. In the past week, WFP has averaged a total of about 13,800 MT food per day, but on 26 May achieved 21,700 MT, its highest day yet. However, WFP maintains 30,000 MT per day as the target.

[¶13.](#) As of May 26, WFP has moved approximately 360,370 MT inside Iraq against the 487,000 MT monthly food requirement of the public distribution system (PDS). Ration shortfalls in most areas, however, can be compensated by pre-existing stocks in the country.

[¶14.](#) Due to a combination of factors, including insecurity on the roads, insecure and damaged warehouses and silos, limited storage and reception capacity identified thus far, and irregular arrival of ships at certain ports, WFP has not yet reached its target. The primary impediment is a lack of adequate storage space. For instance, in Baghdad, WFP has only 40,000 MT warehouse space, and needs at least 100,000 MT. Lack of silo space, because of either insecurity or mechanical troubles, for bulk grain is also quite problematic. The Syria and Turkey corridors have been particularly hard hit by this problem.

[¶15.](#) Another obstacle has been changing the documentation on Oil for Food (OFF) shipments, primarily for shipments that arrived before the war and have remained in ports awaiting the paperwork to change the consignee of the food to WFP, as well as awaiting U.S. Department of Defense COTECHNA inspection. (Note: Under the OFF Program, all OFF shipments had to be certified by COTECHNA before the vendor could be paid. End Note.)

[¶16.](#) And finally, lack of security is the root cause of several problems. WFP does not want to store commodities in warehouses or silos that are not secure. The discharging of cargo from trucks has been impacted by security concerns, as stevedores and other workers are not willing to work during the night. Without 24-hour port and warehouse operations trucks take longer to unload, and the turn-around time for the trucks increases, which slows down the entire operation.

[¶17.](#) As each of the components of the supply chain are linked, any weak link causes delays throughout the system. Consequently, WFP does not expect to reach its 487,000 MT goal until early June.

TURKEY CORRIDOR

¶18. From Turkey, WFP had planned to transport 6,000 MT per day, but thus far WFP has reached a maximum of 4,300 MT per day in bulk commodities. Its average, however, has only been about 3,000 MT per day. Due to recent security incidents and fighting in Kirkuk, WFP had to redirect trucks to Mosul. The Turkey and Syria corridors have suffered from inadequate reception capacity and inability to offload bulk cargo (grain) quickly, as the offloading has to be done manually. WFP is trying to airlift vacuators from Brussels to assist with offloading the bulk grain in the north. And as previously reported, current silo offload capacity in Mosul is limited to 4,000 MT per day.

SYRIA CORRIDOR

¶19. Lack of ship arrivals in Syria has been a limiting factor across the corridor. A ship carrying 14,000 MT of rice, procured with the USAID contribution of USD 200 million to WFP, arrived this week in Tartous and is currently discharging. From Syria, WFP has also been dispatching to Mosul, but because of the limited reception capacity in Mosul, WFP has redirected these trucks to Ba'qubah in Diyala Governorate.

¶110. In addition, there are 135,000 MT of OFF bulk wheat currently stored in a silo in Syria. WFP is trying to expedite shipment of this wheat into Iraq, but the U.N. Office of Iraqi Programs (OIP) says it issued Syria's General Establishment (grain board) the appropriate letter of credit, while the General Establishment says it never received it. As soon as this issue is resolved, the wheat can be transported, but there is no indication as to when this might be.

¶111. The Syria corridor is averaging about 3,000 MT per day, but did achieve WFP's target of 5,000 MT on 25 May.

JORDAN CORRIDOR

¶112. Jordanian truckers recently asked for additional money per ton. With WFP pressure, the Government of Jordan (GOJ) increased the maximum limitation per truckload by four MT, which allows truckers to earn more money per trip. The GOJ has also begun to facilitate customs at the ports and borders, and has given WFP priority on expediting re-entry procedures for trucks returning to Jordan after discharging the cargo in Iraq.

¶113. Recent concern about the repair of the bridge in Ar Rutbah has been allayed. Bechtel is tasked with the repair work and is building a bypass around the bridge before repair on the bridge begins. The bypass construction may begin this week and should take approximately ten days. Contrary to earlier reports, the bypass will not go through the town of Ar Rutbah (where traffic congestion would cause significant delays) so WFP truck traffic should be able to proceed without problems.

¶114. On 27 May, a group of trucks came under fire between the towns of Fallujah and Ar Ramadi. WFP has consistently raised security concerns to Coalition forces about this area since it began using the Jordanian corridor. One Syrian truck driver was reportedly shot in the leg. Further information about the incident will be forthcoming, but the negative impact on use of the corridor has already been made.

¶115. The daily average from Jordan during the past two weeks has been 4,800 MT.

KUWAIT CORRIDOR

¶116. The Kuwaiti ports are relatively full, and container congestion has caused delays in sending food forward from Kuwait. Included in the congestion are the 18,000 MT of USAID Title II contributions of beans, oil, and corn and wheat soy blend. In order to ease the congestion, the commodities are being trucked in the containers and opened in Umm Qasr. Additionally, there have been delays from COTECHNA in inspecting OFF commodities entering Iraq.

¶117. Another limiting factor of dispatches from Kuwait and Iraq is the inability of the Basrah silo to take bulk grain. The grain currently inside the silos is mixed with quantities of dust, which causes operational problems and affects the quality of the grain. Cleaning of the silo has begun under the Bechtel contract, but the date when it will become operational is unclear.

18. Approximately 2,500 MT per day are moving across the Kuwaiti border. Now that there are two ships (Irazu and Thor Mariner) at the Port of Umm Qasr, the daily discharge rates have risen to over 4,000 MT per day. Those ships will depart at the end of the week, and another two ships arrive on 30 and 31 May. In addition, WFP is bringing in a third ship carrying bulk grain that will use the port's mobile vacuators. The need for the silos in Umm Qasr and Basrah will be magnified with the arrival of the bulk wheat in Umm Qasr. The destination of the bulk grain is yet undetermined.

IRAN CORRIDOR

19. Limited cargo arriving in Iranian ports, coupled with recent problems with trucking capacity (as transporters promised more than they could deliver), have been the limiting factors in Iran. Reaching a high of 1,500 MT in one day in early May, the recent average has been only 310 MT per day. Most of the food sent from Iran thus far came from a 10,000 MT loan of wheat flour and some non-cereals. Two ships have arrived in Iranian ports, but the majority of the cargo is sugar from OFF contracts, a commodity already in good supply for the Iraqi public distribution system (PDS).

JONES